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DATA ON STRENGTH AND EQUIPMENT OF BULGARIAN ARMY;
BORDER GUARD-DIVERSIONARY CLASH

BULGARIA FIRST IN SOVIET STANDARDIZATION PROGRAM -- Salzburg, Salzburger
 Nachrichten, 29 Aug 52

Three generals are at present heading the Bulgarian People's Army; all three lived for 20 years in the USSR and commanded Soviet units during World War II. The most important general is Defense Minister Panchevski, followed by General Mikhaylov, Deputy Prime Minister, and General Grekov, Bulgarian Chief of Staff. In addition to this Bulgarian trio, there are two Soviet generals: General Novikov, Commander in Chief of the army, and General Kronov, Deputy Chief of Staff.

The actual strength of the Bulgarian Army at present is about 210,000 men, that is, about 160,000 more men than the peace treaty allowed.

At present, this Satellite army includes the following operational units: 11 infantry divisions, three of which are in part equipped with Soviet tanks (three completely motorized infantry divisions are to be organized by May 1953); two cavalry brigades; three independent antiaircraft regiments; two frontier guard divisions under the Ministry of the Interior; eight regiments of secret state police /state security?; and 20 so-called "free corps" ("Freikorps") /volunteer regiments/. Bulgaria's air force consists of two divisions with a total of 600 aircraft, of which 80 are MIG-15 jet fighters; the rest are old Soviet pursuit planes and about 60 German Junker transports. The organization and formation of a parachute division was completed a few months ago.

All the infantry divisions are completely or partially motorized. About 80 percent of the motor park consists of Soviet ZIS trucks and jeeps; the rest are trucks from the former German Army and include almost all the German types.

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Bulgaria holds first place in the Soviet standardization program because of her favorable strategic position. The Bulgarian Army is almost completely equipped with the most modern Soviet weapons, including some which have not been introduced in the other Satellites, such as 7.6-centimeter field pieces, 17-centimeter howitzers, and rocket projectors.

The equipment of the Bulgarian divisions corresponds to that of the Soviet guard divisions. These divisions consist of 8,000-9,000 men each.

On the other hand, Bulgaria's war fleet is insignificant; it includes three French 100-ton torpedo boats, one speedboat flotilla, two mine sweepers, and about 20 small boats of various kinds, as well as two training ships. In the last few years, the Soviets have expanded Stalin into a notable fleet and submarine base. The Soviet Navy constantly holds maneuvers between this port and Constanta in Rumania.

The ground organization of the air force is considered very good. In the Sofia-Plovdiv region alone not less than 15 airfields were built in the last few years. Some of these can be used by the heaviest aircraft.

The Soviets want to make the Bulgarian Army the strongest among its Satellites. It is easy to see what a burden this puts on the small country, especially when one age class includes only 30,000 men. To fulfill Moscow's wishes, Bulgaria will have to keep its army armed at its present strength almost 6 years.

BORDER GUARD CAPTURES DIVERSIONARIES -- Mladetz, Aug 52

Border guards are not only located at zastavas (unit posts), but also 3 kilometers behind them. At one time, diversionaries entered a certain Ivan's hut and threatened to kill him if he should reveal their whereabouts to the authorities. Nevertheless, he went to the border unit headed by Manchev and revealed the whereabouts of the diversionaries, thus enabling the unit to locate them. One of the bandits directed his submachine gun at officer Barenkov, but Manchev shot him. Finally, some troops came to Manchev and Barenkov's aid and captured the bandits.

Manchev was awarded the "Otlichnik" (Excellent Fighter) badge by the border troop command and was promised a promotion. -- From an article by Jr Lt Grigor Manchev

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